

MINUTES

Bar Harbor Cruise Ship Task Force

January 24, 2008

8:30 AM

Council Chambers

Municipal Building

93 Cottage Street

I. Call to Order 8:37 AM

II. Excused Absences

Krieg/Phippen moved to excuse Nate Young as he was attending required training. All in favor.

All members in attendance with exception to Chief Young; Powers entered at 8:45 AM; Mary Opdyke at 8:50 AM

III. Minutes

Veilleux/Seavey moved to accept the previous meeting minutes for January 10, 2008. All in favor

IV. Staff Reports

Phippen reviewed the involvement of the Harbor Committee – they will review the work of the Task Force at their meeting in February. The Charter empowers the recommendation of harbor fees and other harbor-related management activities to the Harbor Committee.

Powers reported that the federal legislation changes are being re-worked at the Senate level for possible exclusion of the New England seaboard. The intent is to be specific for Hawaii, but there will be a review of the definition of duration. The group discussed this briefly. About half of our cruise ship visits would be affected by a negative change to the legislation. The Chair noted it should be continually monitored.

V. Regular Business

A. Passenger Caps

i. Request of Member Amy Powers for re-consideration, discussion and possible action on setting dates for the Fall Season.

Powers moved to reconsider, with a second from Phippen to reconsider the action on setting the Fall Season end date for accepting Cruise Ships.

Motion passed 9:2 (Seavey and Opdyke opposed).

Fogg's opinions included that it is not the role of the town to set the dates; it should be set by the industry. Businesses are staying open. We are trying to increase the shoulder season, which this is counter-productive. This is unfair to

the business community. He also expressed offense at some of Phippen's language describing extending the season as ridiculous.

Seavey reminded the group that the fishing industry is also a business affected.

Phippen responded that as long as the decision is based upon safety, management, staffing, then the town assuredly has a role. The weather remains unpredictable. It is irresponsible for the Town staff to not set the date.

The Town is a regulatory body limiting growth on the industry – Bahr is concerned with this role. We don't limit other businesses in this way.

Phippen indicated it is not just his operation that is affected – fishing industry, private enterprises that serve the industry, and visitors, residents that want to use the pier. The pier is a very limited facility. His research indicates that the cruise industry does not cruise northern New England past October.

Krieg indicated an end date is important to have closure and opened up to a date certain in the first week in November for consideration. Gordon agreed to a November 10th date but reminded the group that the industry in the Maritimes is trying to extend the season.

Paradis noted with a new fee, 2 ships in November would have about \$10,000 impact.

Powers authorized her floor time for Eben Salvatore from Ocean Properties. His staff is there until mid-November. He feels that the Harbormaster has the ability to cancel an arrival to bad weather and that the cruise ships themselves cancel because of weather; if they cannot operate tenders then they won't come in. The industry assumes their risks and the Captain makes the decision. Once one industry extends, then, other businesses follow.

Skip Strong was also given the floor from Powers. He indicated that weather is a big liability and the safety of the tender operators is a priority. The market for late fall is the British visitor; they have indicated it is quiet and cold. They are usually sold-out.

Veilleux gave his floor time to Kay from the kayak/bicycle trip company. She indicated it will be difficult to manage operations late in October and not November. This is due to both weather and staffing.

Paradis moved to amend the motion to allow the end of the season to be November 10th. Motion passed 8:3 (Seavey, Phippen and Opdyke).

The new amended motion is for the fall season recommendation to be September 1st to November 10th.

Veilleux moved to table the vote and the motion failed for a lack of a second.

Motion passed 8:3 (Phippen, Seavey, Opdyke opposed).

ii. Confirm actions on the passenger cap recommendation to be forwarded to Council.

Fogg moved to forward the memorandum as amended with today's actions to the Town Council, seconded by Powers. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Reporting on a request to the Town Manager for staff to research the cost and feasibility of the Town becoming Coast Guard T105 compliant to receive cruise ship passengers on Town docks.

Phippen indicated he has commenced this work. He is currently gathering the necessary information for Coast Guard review. He can fill out the necessary forms for their review. He is at the feasibility phase.

Powers reminded the group that the study noted that the town will have difficulty managing all tender operations. Seavey responded that the Town needs to prepare if the private facility ended their accommodations.

The role of government is not to compete with private industry, Fogg noted. Phippen has been asked by industry representatives in the recent past if there is another place to tender their operations.

C. Cruise Ship Fees

i. Discussion and possible action on the dollar amount of cruise ship fees.

The Chair noted that the bundling of fees was recommended in the study so that the industry knows how much it costs up front to come here. He reviewed his scheme for fees that was sent to the group.

Powers indicated that an industry representative told her that he welcomed fees to support to extend their capability to operate in the harbor. They are interested in learning about the projects in Bar Harbor; they see these projects as mutually beneficial. They advocate programs for public outreach, sustainable tourism, supporting water quality monitoring, and ANP as well as CIP projects. They also want to have the Town more involved with the industry. Juneau raised their fees but has not made improvements from the last 5 years so the industry is concerned that the fees get dedicated to projects.

ii. Discussion on port fee dedication – infrastructure or programming enhancements

The Chair noted that though the fee may be bundled, it should be broken out as in his proposed table so the industry knows how their fees are dedicated or spent. Bahr agreed to this approach. Harbormaster's office and bathrooms at Agamont are two deferred projects that could be considered for this dedication of fees.

Seavey wants to make sure the fee is reasonable on top of other fees.

Cook questioned that a bathroom would need maintenance and could fees go to those costs as well.

Powers responded that the group should prepare a list of items for dedication of a port development fee. She added that each harbor is different. She requested staff to place the Portland fees schedule in the next packet.

Gordon opined that the fee should go to an Ambassador program to connect with the industry as well as the visitor. Signage improvements were also noted as another project.

Veilleux agreed this is an important function; this is a good way to promote the whole town and not just who the cruise ship industry advocates.

Krieg indicated that an agenda item for the next meeting should be committed to where the fees need to be dedicated – that is, to what projects, what operations, etc. The Chair agreed. She also noted that items for the packets should be sent noting the request to be forwarded to the whole task force.

iii. Discussion and possible action on how to best bundle cruise ship fees.

This was deferred to the next meeting by the Chair

VI. Public Comment

Liz Weston entered comment that the Park may not be able to adequately serve the public for an extended tour season. Acadia Corporation also is closed at the end of October.

Eben Salvatore indicated he would bring their plan for development to the next meeting. *Krieg recommended this be placed first on the agenda so that our CIP can be best coordinated with what the private industry is planning to provide.*

VII. Items for next agenda

Optional drop-off areas for buses were requested by Veilleux. The Chair indicated this will be the second project after fees.

Powers noted that she will be presenting a PowerPoint presentation on Bar Harbor and on fee bundling at the industry convention in San Francisco. She said she is going to be before the industry leaders. The Chair indicated care should be given in presentations that make it clear this is a work in progress and are conceptual. He also told the group the Town Council authorized his attendance at this convention as well. *A synopsis of the convention will be presented at the next meeting.*

VIII. Set next meeting time, date and place

February 14th, 2008 is the next meeting; Paradis may be absent due to a vacation.

Powers, Gordon, and Fogg will be absent for the first meeting in March for the Seatrade meeting.

Gordon requested that a mechanism for conference calling be accommodated.

IX. Adjournment

Seavey/Veilleux moved to adjourn at 10:38 AM, all were in favor of the motion.

These minutes were prepared by Anne Krieg, Planning Director and Secretary/Staff to the Task Force for distribution on January 30, 2008.